

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method and apparatus for authorizing multicast group membership based on network policies, such as machine and user identities. An end station communicates with a LAN switch over a LAN link. The LAN switch inhibits the end station from joining any multicast group before the end station or a user on the end station becomes authenticated. Once the end station or a user on the end station becomes authenticated, the LAN switch authorizes the end station to join one or more multicast groups in conformance with a multicast group authorization specified for the end station or the user. The LAN switch enforces the multicast group authorization attendant to "snooping" of IGMP membership reports received from the end station or processing of CGMP join messages received from a router.